



Governor Proposes DHS Administer the School Readiness Program

Earlier this week, the Governor proposed a change to our legislators that the Department of Human Services (DHS) administer the School Readiness Program. While this was not our original plan, we strongly believe this is the best solution for ensuring late-born children have an opportunity for early learning experiences in 2014.

EOEL and DHS Collaboration

DHS has the capability and experience for implementing new programs. They also have the administrative infrastructure and expertise in program and contract management. With a hard-deadline of January 2014 to begin enrollment of children to the School Readiness Program, it is critical to have the program up and running in a timely manner.

EOEL and DHS are working together to discuss the design details of the School Readiness Program. Together, we continue to build on the research our office has put together as well as the input we've collected from the early learning community, to finalize components of the program.

EOEL will continue to work in conjunction with DHS on implementation. The plan is for DHS to administer two main contracts 1) to provide School Readiness services through eligible private programs and the DOE; and 2) to an entity that will interact with parents to assist with application, enrollment and placement. We will also need to follow the language of the law, once legislation is finalized.

Incremental Building of Hawaii's Early Childhood System

The School Readiness Program is the first phase of the state's long-term plan of raising the quality of early learning system in Hawaii. We are confident the School Readiness Program will set initial benchmarks of quality and effect positive change towards developmentally appropriate learning for young children.

This will be an incremental process. Our ultimate goal is the Early Childhood Education Program, where we can provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children while implementing higher standards for curriculum, assessment and teacher quality. Under each program, school/family partnerships will be encouraged, enhancing a child's learning and development in the home as well as the classroom.